



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 10/617,239 | 07/10/2003 | Masahiro Ohgami | A35901 074224.0114 | 2852 |
| 21003 | 7590 | 07/13/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| BAKER & BOTTS 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA 44TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10112 | | | | SMITH, NICHOLAS A |
| ART UNIT | | PAPER NUMBER | | |
| | | 1742 | | |

DATE MAILED: 07/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/617,239 | OHGAMI ET AL. |
| | Examiner Nicholas A. Smith | Art Unit 1742 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE ____ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 May 2006.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 4/5/2006 has been entered.

Status of Claims

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 remain for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

The term "low yield ratio" in claim 1, line 6 and claim 6, line 6 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "low yield ratio" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese patent 11-012684.

In regards to the unamended features of claims 1, 2 and 4-6, the rejection is maintained for the reasons set forth in the previous office action dated 8-08-05.

In regards to the amended feature "of buildings" in claims 1, 2 and 4-6, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In the instant case, the claimed invention is a steel pipe. While the claim recites the intended use of the steel pipe "for construction of buildings" and JP'684 does not specifically mention this use, JP'684 could be used for this purpose. Therefore, there is no patentable difference. *MPEP 2111.02 II*

In regards to the amended feature of "wherein the steel pipe has a low yield ratio," JP'684 teaches a steel alloy with the same composition and same microstructural limitations as the instantly claimed invention. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would expect them to have the same properties, such as low yield ratio. The claiming of a new use, new function or unknown property which is inherently present in the prior art does not necessarily make the claim patentable. *In re Best*, 562 F.2d 1252, 1254, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). See MPEP 2112 I.

In regards to the amended feature of writing claim 6 as an independent claim (formerly dependent on claim 1), it does not change the scope of claim 6.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 4/5/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues:

1. JP'684 teaches steel generally used for manufacture of machine components rather than for building support columns as in the instant application.
2. JP'684 does not teach the property of "low yield ratio."
3. JP'684 teaches use of Cr, Mo or V to enhance friction resistance following working of the material into machinery parts as opposed to the instant application's intention of enhancing the strength of the steel pipe while simultaneously maintaining a low yield ratio.
4. Applicant asserts there is a patentable difference between Si content of JP'684 and instant application.

Examiner responds:

1. See reason stated above.
2. See reason stated above.
3. The reason or motivation to modify the reference may often suggest what the inventor has done, but for a different purpose or to solve a different problem. It is not necessary that the prior art suggest the combination to achieve the same advantage or result discovered by applicant. In re Linter, 458 F.2d 1013, 173 USPQ 560 (CCPA 1972); In re Dillon, 919 F.2d

688, 16 USPQ2d 1897 (Fed. Cir. 1990), cert. denied, 500 U.S. 904 (1991).

See MPEP 2144. In the instant case, the motivations provided by JP'684 to use Cr, Mo or V in order to enhance friction resistance following working of the material into machinery parts are sufficient reasons, even though it does not match the motivation of the instant application to enhance the strength of the steel pipe while simultaneously maintaining a low yield ratio.

4. See reason stated in previous office action dated 1/3/2006, paragraph 5.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nicholas A. Smith whose telephone number is (571)-272-8760. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (571)-272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

RK
ROY KING
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1700